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*Under Secretary Armacost*

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# The CSCE Process and East-West Diplomacy

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*Following is a statement by Michael H. Armacost, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe,[1] Washington, D.C., March 25, 1986.*

I welcome this opportunity today to meet with the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe to discuss the Administration's approach to CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe]—the "Helsinki" process.

The hearings held by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe are important. They focus attention on the contribution that improved respect for human rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would make to overall East-West relations. We welcome the commission's sustained work over the past decade—and the efforts of concerned private American groups—to promote the goals of the Helsinki Final Act. Through your hearings, resolutions, participation on U.S. delegations, and research and publications, the commission and its staff have worked vigorously and served the interests of the United States well. We look forward to continuing this close and productive relationship as we prepare for CSCE meetings in Bern next month and in Vienna in November.

In your letter of invitation, you asked that I put the CDE [Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe] negotiations in Stockholm and other elements of the CSCE process into perspective and provide an assessment of the prospects for the Vienna review meeting and beyond. Let me begin with an overview that describes our assessment of the process, outlines our approach, and then looks ahead, mainly to the Bern and Vienna meetings. [Head of the U.S. delegation to the CDE] Ambassador Robert Barry will address more specifically the prospects of the CDE.

## Assessing the CSCE Process

The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe represents a framework within which the 35 participating states can work to resolve the humanitarian, economic, and security issues that divide Europe. The Final Act underscores that each of these areas is of equal importance to genuine security and cooperation. The Western objective for the past decade has been to preserve and strengthen this process through thorough review of implementation of the Final Act and by agreement on balanced and constructive steps forward.

At the 10th anniversary commemoration of the Final Act, attended by 35 foreign ministers last summer in Helsinki, Secretary Shultz assessed the CSCE process. Although the reality of Europe's division remained, he noted, we have seen limited progress. The Final Act has had some practical effect. For example, journalists travel more easily between CSCE countries. Significant numbers of citizens in some East European countries have been reunited with their families in the West. And the review conferences in Belgrade and Madrid as well as other CSCE meetings have kept alive the aspirations embodied in the Final Act.

In summing up our assessment, however, Secretary Shultz concluded that:

> . . . 10 years after the signing of the Final Act, no one can deny the gap between hope and performance. Despite the real value of the Final Act as a standard of conduct, the most important promises of a decade ago have not been kept.

There is no need to recite the basis for this conclusion. The record of compliance of the Warsaw Pact nations with their CSCE undertakings is seriously flawed.

- The number of Soviet Jews permitted to emigrate fell from 51,000 in 1979 to somewhat over 1,000 last year.

[1] The U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe was established by the Congress in 1976. It is composed of nine Senators, nine Congressmen, and one representative each from the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce. The commission monitors the acts of the CSCE signatory states, with a particular emphasis on their compliance with the humanitarian provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and the Madrid concluding document. It also seeks to encourage the development of activities that expand East-West economic cooperation and a greater interchange of people and ideas between East and West.

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And we have seen similar reductions in the number of Armenian and ethnic German emigrants.

- While recent Soviet decisions to permit 33 families to be reunited in the West are welcome, we cannot forget that there are many others who remain separated from their families.
- The Soviet Union continues to imprison its citizens who speak out on human rights.
- Andrei Sakharov remains isolated in Gorkiy, although his wife has been permitted to travel abroad for medical treatment.
- Several religious groups are persecuted in Romania, religious leaders are imprisoned, and churches are demolished.
- In Poland, Bogdan Lis, Adam Michnik, and Wladyslaw Frasyniuk have been sentenced to prison terms for championing free trade unions.
- In Czechoslovakia, the regime severely restricts the Catholic Church and has been especially active in suppressing religious dissent within the Charter '77 movement.
- In Bulgaria, the government has attempted to deprive almost 10% of its people—the Turkish minority—of its ethnic heritage.
- And despite a generally favorable human rights record, in Hungary there is continued harassment of dissidents.

This mixed record has led some to express understandable skepticism over the value of continued involvement in the CSCE process. We share those frustrations. We believe, however, that we must keep faith with those who struggle to realize the goals of Helsinki. That is why, on the 10th anniversary of the Final Act last summer, President Reagan reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the Helsinki principles and our dedication to giving them meaning in the daily lives of all citizens whose governments signed the Final Act.

Let me discuss the three basic considerations that lead us to view the CSCE process as a valuable instrument of Western diplomacy, despite the disappointments of its first decade.

### Supporting the Western Agenda

First, it is clear that the Helsinki Final Act serves as a vehicle to marshal support for a fundamentally Western agenda. The Soviet Union sought to legalize the division of Europe, but the Final Act looks toward its peaceful unification. The East wanted to highlight the central role of the state, but the Final Act stresses individual rights and freedom. The Final Act asserted that respect for human rights was a fundamental element of genuine security and cooperation; it confirmed that a government's abuse of its own citizens was a legitimate subject for international discussion. Far from giving the Soviet Union a lever on Western Europe, the CSCE process confirmed the continuing engagement of the United States in Europe.

The CSCE process has, thus, served to foster and reinforce alliance unity. In turn, alliance unity—insisting on compliance with CSCE undertakings and balance between security and human rights goals—has been essential to the limited progress we have made in CSCE.

And I should add that the NATO alliance has not stood alone in pushing for both balance and for progress in human rights. Our neutral friends have found that in CSCE they can play a special role. Their neutral credentials remain untarnished. But from the beginning in CSCE they have pushed for Soviet adherence to the commitments undertaken in Madrid and Helsinki.

### International Conduct and Human Rights Standards

The second area where the Final Act plays a significant role in our East-West diplomacy relates to the standards it set for the conduct of individual governments toward each other and toward their own citizens. In Helsinki, the United States, Canada, and 33 European states agreed to observe 10 basic principles in their relations with one another, as well as with other states. We can cite no evidence that this has significantly altered Soviet behavior. But these principles have given a solid framework for Western arguments concerning that behavior.

A number of the principles—respect for sovereignty, non-use of force, nonintervention in internal affairs, equal rights and self-determination of peoples—have increased the impact of Western condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and of Soviet pressure on Poland in the early 1980s. The CSCE process helped focus the world's outrage at the unlawful Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, particularly during the opening weeks of the Madrid review conference. Similarly, the strong Western response in CSCE to the imposition of martial law in Poland drew international attention to Soviet actions that contradicted its Helsinki obligations.

It is in the area of human rights standards that CSCE has played a particularly significant role. The Final Act is based on the view that the interests of individual human beings are a fundamental part of security and stability in Europe. Greater security and a more stable peace depend on greater freedom for the people of Europe.

At Helsinki in 1975, the Soviet Union and other East European countries willingly subscribed to principles affirming basic human rights and to provisions calling for freer flow of ideas, information, and people. These provisions were strengthened in the 1983 Madrid concluding document. These two documents added legitimacy to international discussion of the way a government treats its citizens. Coupled with a process of followup meetings, the Final Act gives the West a vehicle for keeping the pressure on Eastern governments for improvements in human rights performance.

One can only speculate on the motivations of the Soviet Union and other East European governments in signing the Final Act. If they thought their commitments would be ignored—they were wrong.

For years the Soviets sought to deflect human rights criticism by hiding behind "noninterference in internal affairs." The hollowness of this defense, however, has been exposed at successive CSCE meetings during which the Soviets have been forced to confront the facts of their poor record. At the CSCE Human Rights Experts Meeting in Ottawa, the Soviets changed tactics and took the offensive, charging Western abuses of social and economic rights. This change of tactic implicitly conceded the legitimacy of raising human rights issues involving another country. And it testified to the growing force of international concern over human rights, a trend that the Final Act has nourished.

The Final Act has helped bring greater international attention to the cause of human rights. By signing the Final Act, the Soviet Union created the expectation that it would comply, making its failures to do so all the more troubling, not only in the United States but in Europe as well. In the United States, the Final Act gave rise to the CSCE Commission and provided a focus for the network of private organizations which have pressed for improved respect for human rights. The existence of agreed standards has also encouraged other Western governments to speak up against human rights abuses. And it has

provided a focal point for efforts by European parliaments and private groups.

From the 1977 Belgrade review conference to the recent Budapest Cultural Forum, expressions of Western concern over Soviet abuses have become increasingly frequent and specific. During General Secretary Gorbachev's visit to Paris, for example, President Mitterrand reported to the French people that he had insisted that movement in "Basket Three" [Cooperation in Humanitarian and Other Fields] of the Final Act take place at the same pace as in the other areas of CSCE. And French journalists took Gorbachev to task for Soviet failure to live up to the standards enshrined in the Final Act.

The Soviets, moreover, have shown themselves sensitive to such criticism, particularly when it adversely affects the image Moscow wants to cultivate in Western Europe.

The CSCE experts meeting in Ottawa last year, where I had the privilege to deliver the opening statement for the United States, illustrates well the diplomatic value of the CSCE process. Soviet intransigence and refusal to commit itself to any improvements in its human rights practices blocked agreement on meaningful, practical steps forward. Nevertheless, the meeting was worthwhile and advanced our objectives.

- It gave us nearly 3 weeks to debate Soviet adherence to the commitments in the Final Act. The West, both our allies and our neutral friends, put the Soviets and other East Europeans in the dock for human rights abuses. The East was effectively isolated.
- The West rejected initial Eastern claims that criticism constituted interference in the internal affairs of another state.
- The West held firm in rejecting Soviet efforts to distort Principle Seven of the Final Act dealing with human rights. Instead, the Western states tabled a set of specific proposals that constituted a common human rights agenda for the future.

In sum, Ottawa gave the West an opportunity to sound a united call for improved respect for human rights in the East.

We regret that the Ottawa meeting, like the CSCE process as a whole, has not done more to enhance the prospect of short-term improvement for individuals in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But such meetings and the international attention they focus on human rights issues do advance the cause. The fact that attention is paid to their plight provides comfort, if not hope, to the citizens of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And most of those in Eastern Europe active in the struggle for human rights support the CSCE process. They welcome our emphasis on the commitments in the Final Act and our effort to bring about improved Eastern compliance.

It is undeniable that the CSCE process, more than any other forum, has served to focus the world's attention on massive Soviet human rights violations. And in doing so, the CSCE process has served to expose the nature of Soviet power and promote the cause of freedom around the world.

The meeting on human contacts in Bern that begins in April will focus attention on such important CSCE issues as freedom to travel, freedom to emigrate, and family reunification. As Michael Novak, the head of our Bern delegation, testified before you last week, it is our hope that this meeting will mark an advance toward lowering the barriers that divide the peoples and families of the East and West. We hope the spirit of cooperation on humanitarian affairs which emerged from President Reagan's Geneva meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev will be given a new reality through concrete deeds. Steps forward on such issues would make an important contribution to the Vienna followup meeting later this year.

### European Security Issues

Security is the third area in which the CSCE process plays an important role in our overall East-West policy. Far from fulfilling Soviet aims to diminish our role in European security affairs, CSCE provided a forum which engaged the United States and Canada, together with European governments, in a discussion of the basic questions of European security.

At the Madrid followup meeting, the West secured a mandate for the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe that serves our interests. The mandate recognized explicitly that the CDE was an integral part of the CSCE process, expanded the zone defined in the Final Act to cover the Soviet Union west of the Urals, and stipulated that the measures adopted should have military significance and be verifiable.

At the CDE conference, we have an opportunity to find concrete ways to increase confidence and security in Europe. NATO is pushing for adoption of specific confidence- and security-building measures that address some of the proximate causes of war. They would make European military activities more predictable and more stable. Through skillful negotiation over the past 2 years, the West has prevented the Soviets from turning Stockholm into a forum for empty, propagandistic declarations that support their vision of a pan-European security order excluding the United States.

The growing consensus in Stockholm is based on the Western concept of security. It features practical measures which would increase our knowledge of potentially threatening military activities. And these measures would be verifiable by every state participating in the conference.

With the setting of a September 19, 1986, adjournment date and the recent move to drafting, the conference has now moved into a more intensive phase. President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev at their meeting last November made a political commitment to work with others for a successful conclusion in Stockholm. The U.S. delegation has been instructed to pursue concrete results at the negotiating table.

An agreement in Stockholm that met our objectives would serve the West's security interests by providing a set of concrete rules governing military activities in Europe. Through the exchange of information about forces in Europe and an annual calendar of planned activities, we would be able to increase mutual understanding about intentions behind those activities. This would provide greater openness and improved mutual understanding about military intentions and practices—contri-buting to enhanced stability and security in Europe.

If successful, the Stockholm conference can help achieve the primary goal of the CSCE process—lowering the barriers that artificially divide Europe between East and West.

These various strands of the CSCE process are tied together by the concept of balance. This concept is founded on recognition, inherent in the Final Act itself, of the interdependence among the three parts of the CSCE process—humanitarian, security, and economic. Military-security aspects cannot be dealt with productively if they are isolated from humanitarian and human rights considerations. Thus, for example, we have countered vigorously Eastern attempts to establish a military-security forum as an autonomous entity, overshadowing our efforts to improve human rights and human contacts.

## U.S. Commitment and the Challenge Ahead

We are committed to balanced progress across the board. We insist on moving ahead in all areas because we believe all 10 principles are equally important. At the same time, there is no ready formula for the application of balance. It is not a mechanical concept. It is unrealistic to posit a fixed linkage between security and human rights. The trade-offs cannot be put in such simple terms.

And yet, it is also unrealistic to believe that real and enduring improvement can take place in East-West relations without progress on humanitarian and human rights issues.

To quote French Foreign Minister Dumas: "Can a state which is not at peace with its own citizens really gain the confidence of its neighbors?" Concrete steps in this area would go far toward restoring the political confidence and political support for constructive progress in CSCE.

Balance is the challenge for the Vienna followup meeting that begins November 4. The delegations at Vienna will have to weigh what has been achieved on human rights and human contacts, on cultural and economic cooperation, and on security. They will have to look at the results of the Ottawa Human Rights Experts Meeting, the Budapest Cultural Forum, and the upcoming Bern Human Contacts Meeting. The question of the future of CDE will be part of this overall assessment. Even if the CDE is successful, we must be careful to ensure that the security component is not allowed to dominate other aspects of the CSCE process.

In addition to maintaining balance, the West faces two other basic tasks at Vienna.

- The first is to maintain Western unity. The Soviet Union never tires of seeking ways to exploit the CSCE process to drive wedges between us and our allies. If we are to make progress on issues of importance to us, we must present a united front.
- Second, we must take stock fully and candidly of the extent to which commitments have been kept and the extent to which governments have fallen short. Vienna must establish a clear record. Governments must be made to account for their commitments.

Given the Eastern record on humanitarian and human rights issues, the Vienna followup meeting is likely to be a difficult conference. Progress on humanitarian and human rights issues in the months ahead would certainly enhance the prospects for a constructive outcome, which we would welcome.

We are at an early stage in our own planning for the Vienna meeting. We look forward to working closely with the commission in the months ahead on the issues we will confront in Vienna. As in Madrid, we will lean heavily on your skills, expertise, and judgment.

The Helsinki Final Act 10 years ago set an agenda for progress toward greater security and a more stable peace in Europe. It evoked a vision of a united Europe in which barriers were removed and freedoms were enjoyed throughout the continent, a Europe in which dialogue rather than conflict resolved differences and cooperation benefited individuals in both the West and the East.

That is the vision that will inform our approach to Vienna and beyond. The disappointments of the past decade indicate there are no easy strategies for achieving the ambitious goals set forth in the Final Act. Patience, skillful diplomacy, Western unity, and the courage of our convictions will be required.

In closing, let me recall President Reagan's statement on the close of the last review conference 3 years ago:

> In concluding the Madrid meeting, we reaffirm our commitment to the Helsinki process. We will not flag in our continued determination to work with all governments and peoples whose goal is the strengthening of peace in freedom. As Madrid has shown, dialogue, when based on realistic expectations and conducted with patience, can produce results. These results are often gradual and hard won, but they are the necessary building blocks for a more secure and stable world. . . . Giving substance to the promises of Madrid and Helsinki will remain one of our prime objectives. ■

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